



TERMS & ABBREVIATIONS

A

ABCs:

The critical components of the initial evaluation of an accident or trauma victim. They stand for:

- A = Airway with cervical spine control
- B = Breathing
- C = Circulation with control of bleeding

Abduction:

To move a limb or some other body part away from the midline of the body.

ABG:

Arterial blood gas reading.

ACE:

Angiotension-converting enzyme.

ACE Bandage:

Trade name for an elastic bandage made of woven material.

Acidotic:

Abnormally high acidity of body fluids and tissues.

Acute:

Sudden, intense flare-up.

Agonal:

A word used to describe a major negative change in a patient's condition, usually preceding immediate death, such as a complete cessation of breathing or a dire change in the patient's EEG or EKG.

ALS:

Advanced Life Support.

Alzheimer's Disease:

A progressive disease with specific brain abnormalities marked by memory loss and progressive inability to function normally at even the simplest tasks.

AMA:

Against medical advice or *American Medical Association*.

Ambu-Bag®:

Proprietary name for a Bag-Valve Mask.

Amp:

Abbreviation for *Ampule*, which is a sealed plastic or glass capsule containing a single dose of a drug in a sterile solution for injection.

Anaphylactic Shock:

An extreme allergic reaction that usually involves heart failure, circulatory collapse, a severe asthma-like difficulty in breathing and sometimes results in death.

Anemia:

Chronically low hematocrit.

Aneurysm:

a balloonlike swelling in the wall of an artery.

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Angina Pectoris:

A severe acute attack of cardiac pain.

Angioplasty:

Plastic surgery of blood vessels during which a balloon is passed into the artery and inflated to enlarge it and increase blood flow.

Anhidrosis:

The abnormal absence of sweat.

Anterior:

Word used to describe the front surface of an organ, muscle, etc.

Aortic Calcification:

Hardening of the aorta, the main artery coming out of the left ventricle of the heart, usually from cholesterol deposits or some other organic substance.

Aortic Coarctation:

A dangerous narrowing of the aorta.

Aortic Dissection:

A tear in the aorta.

Apgar Score:

Test administered to newborn infants to evaluate their physical condition.

Apgar Score			
Sign	0	1	2
Heart Rate	Absent	Slow (less than 100)	Greater than 100
Respiratory Effort	Absent	Slow, Irregular	Good; crying
Muscle Tone	Limp	Some flexion of extremities	Active motion
Reflex Irritability	No response	Grimace	Cough or sneeze
Color	Blue, pale	Body pink; extremities blue	Completely pink

System of scoring infant's physical condition one minute after birth. The heart rate, respiration, muscle tone, response to stimuli, and color are each rated 0, 1, or 2. The maximum total score is 10. Those with low scores require immediate attention if they are to survive. The test may be repeated at 5 or more minutes after birth in order to judge recovery of infants with low scores.

Aortic Rupture:

When the aorta bursts.

Arterial Stick:

Insertion of an IV line into an artery.

Arrhythmia:

When the beat of the heart is no longer originating from the sinus node, and the rhythm is abnormal.

ASA:

The abbreviation for *Acetylsalicylic Acid* (aspirin).

Aspirate, Aspiration:

To draw in or out using suction. The term can refer to inhaling purposefully (such as breathing in oxygen or inhalants) or inhaling accidentally (such as sucking food into the airway). May also refer to medical

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interventions to remove harmful substances (such as air, body fluids, or bone fragments) or to remove tissue samples for testing.

Astrocytoma:

A slowly growing tumor of the glial tissue of the brain and the spinal cord.

Asystole:

A condition in which the heart no longer beats and usually cannot be restarted.

Atypical angina:

A form of angina pectoris that does not manifest the typical angina symptoms of chest pain, shortness of breath, etc, but which comes on suddenly and occurs without a predisposing cause.

Awake, Alert and Oriented X3 Nonfocal:

Medical shorthand indicating that a patient is in a cogent state and aware of their surroundings. "Oriented x3" means the patient is aware of person, place, and time (WHO they are, WHERE they are, and WHAT TIME it is.)

B

Babinski's Reflex:

Also known as the plantar reflex; the movement of the big toe upward instead of downward; used to test injury to, or diseases of, the upper motor neurons.

Bagging:

[Slang] Manual respiration for a patient having breathing trouble that uses a handheld squeeze bag attached to a face mask.

Barlow's Syndrome:

Infantile scurvy.

Bilateral Hemothorax:

Blood in both sides of the pleura, the membrane covering the lung.

"Binky^(TM) Test"

[Slang/Phrase] The ability of an infant to evidence basic stability and an interest in "the important things in life" by placidly sucking on a pacifier. [From an account by M. Borgeson, MD, of an infant whose over-hasty intubation for mere tachypnea without respiratory distress was averted by a nurse who placed a pacifier in the child's mouth, thus demonstrating the "positive Binky^(TM) Test," and blocking an unnecessary procedure.] The term is a salutary reminder to check the whole patient and not focus too narrowly upon a single finding.

Blood Culture:

Incubating a blood sample so that suspected infectious bacteria can multiply and thus be identified.

Blood Gas:

A test to determine the gas-phase components of blood, including oxygen, carbon dioxide, pH balance, etc.

Blood Pressure:

A measure of how well blood circulates through your arteries, listen in the format of the systolic pressure over the diastolic pressure. Normal blood pressure is about 120/80.

Blood Swab:

A blood sample taken with a cotton-tipped stick.

BLS:

Basic Life Support.

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Body Packer:

[Slang] A drug courier who swallows condoms filled with cocaine or heroin in order to smuggle them into a country and then passes them rectally after he's safe.

Bolus:

A large dose of a drug that is given (usually intravenously) at the beginning of treatment to raise blood-level concentrations to a therapeutic level.

Bounceback:

[Slang] A patient who returns to the ER with the same complaint shortly after being released.

Bowel Disimpaction:

Manual removal of impacted fecal matter from a patient's rectum.

BP:

Abbreviation for blood pressure.

Bradycardic:

A slowing of the heart rate to less than 50 beats per minute.

Breath Sounds:

The sounds heard through a stethoscope placed on the chest over the lungs.

Bronchoscopy:

The use of an endoscope to examine and take biopsies from the interior of the bronchia.

BSA:

Burn Surface Area. The total area (expressed as a percentage) of the burned area on a patient's body.

BUN:

Abbreviation for *Blood Urea Nitrogen*.

BVM:

A handheld squeeze bag, attached to a face mask, used to assist in providing artificial ventilation of the lungs.

C

C-Section:

Shorthand for cesarean section, which is surgical delivery of a baby through the abdominal wall.

C-Spine:

Shorthand for cervical spine, or the neck.

CAIRA

Chemical Accident-Incident Response & Assistance

Calcium Oxalate Stone:

A kidney stone.

Calot's Triangle:

The cystic duct, the common duct, and the liver.

Calyx:

A cup-shaped part of the kidneys.

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Capillary Refill:

When a fingernail is pressed, the nail bed turns white. Capillary refill refers to the return of the nail bed to pink color. Good cap refill is two seconds or less.

Carboxyhemoglobin:

A substance formed when the poisonous gas carbon monoxide combines with hemoglobin in the blood. Carboxyhemoglobin is incapable of transporting oxygen to the body's organs. Large amounts of this compound are found in carbon monoxide poisoning.

Cardiac Effusion:

See pericardial effusion.

Cardiac Enzymes:

Creatine kinase, lactate dehydrogenase, and aspartate transaminase.

Cardiomyopathy:

A disorder of the heart muscle that can often be fatal.

Cardiac Tamponade:

Compression of the heart from fluid such as an effusion or blood.

CAT scan:

Computerized axial tomography.

Catcher's Mask:

[Slang] A device used for a patient with bleeding varices in the throat that allows a tube with two balloons attached to be positioned securely in the throat and inflated. The balloons then put pressure on the enlarged veins in order to stop the bleeding.

Catheter:

A flexible tube for withdrawing fluids from, or introducing fluids into, a cavity of the body. Frequently used to drain the urinary bladder (Foley catheter).

CBC:

Abbreviation for *Complete Blood Count*, which is an all-purpose blood test; combining diagnostic evaluations of red blood cell count, white cell count, erythrocyte indices, hematocrit, and a differential blood count.

CC:

Abbreviation for *Chief Complaint*.

cc:

Abbreviation for *Cubic Centimeters*.

Cecum:

A pouch at the junction of the large and small intestine. The lower end bears the vermiform appendix.

Cellulitis:

A skin infection.

Central Line:

The central location in the circulation of the vein used, usually in the internal jugular and subclavian veins in the neck, or the femoral veins in the groin. This has the benefit of being able to send more fluid into the body.

Cesarean Section:

Surgical delivery of a baby through the abdominal wall.

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Champagne Tap:

[Slang] A successful lumbar puncture with no red blood cells found, which means it is as clean as possible. So-called because the supervising resident has to, by custom, buy the student a bottle champagne.

Chem 7:

A battery of blood chemistry tests; the seven parts of a Chem 7; blood urea nitrogen (**BUN**), chloride, CO₂, creatinine, glucose, potassium, and sodium. Normal values for these components are:

o	BUN:	7 to 20 mg/dl
o	serum chloride:	101 to 111 mmol/L
o	CO ₂ :	20 to 29 mmol/L
o	creatinine:	.8 to 1.4 mg/dl
o	glucose test:	64 to 128 mg/dl
o	serum potassium:	3.7 to 5.2 mEq/L
o	serum sodium:	136 to 144 mEq/L

Chest Film:

A chest X-ray.

CHF:

Abbreviation for *Congestive Heart Failure*. See pulmonary edema.

CID:

Abbreviation for *Cervical Immobilization Device*.

Claudication:

Limping caused by impaired blood supply to the legs.

Coag Panel:

A blood test used to determine the clotting factors of a patient's blood.

Code Brown:

[Slang] Term used when a patient doesn't make it to the bathroom in time.

COPD:

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. Also known by the acronym *COLD* (Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease). Disease process that casues decreased ability of the lungs to perform their function of ventilation. Diseases that can cause this are chronic bronchitis, pulmonary emphysema, chronic asthma, and chronic bronchiolitis.

Cordotomy:

Surgical severing of the nerves in the spinal cord to relieve intractable pain in the pelvis and lower limbs.

CPR:

CardioPulmonary Resuscitation.

Crasher:

[Slang] A person who passes out in the ER, often not a patient but a family member who is upset over what's going on with a loved one.

Cricothyroidotomy:

A procedure used to surgically establish an airway in the patient's throat when intubation isn't possibly because of swelling or bleeding.

Cricothyrotomy:

See cricothyroidotomy.

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Crispy Critter:

[Slang] Irreverent ER term for a seriously burned patient.

Crit:

Short for hematocrit.

CPK:

Creatine Phosphokinase, an enzyme that elevates in the blood when a heart attack occurs, used as a confirmation of a heart attack and as a gauge of damage.

CT scan:

See CAT scan.

CVA:

Abbreviation for *Cerebrovascular Accident*, i.e. stroke.

Cyanotic:

When a patient's skin and mucous membranes are bluish in color from an inadequate supply of oxygen in the blood.

Cystic Fibrosis:

A lung disease that causes the production of thick mucus in the lungs, hampering breathing.

D

D5, D5W:

The abbreviation for dextrose (glucose) given in a 5 percent normal saline solution.

DB:

ER abbreviation for a *Dead Body*.

Dead Shovel:

[Slang] ER term for a fat man who dies while shoveling snow.

Debride, Debridement:

Cleaning an open wound by removing foreign material and dead tissue. Debridement of burns is extremely painful.

Decerebration:

The progressive loss of cerebral function; advanced decerebration (and the resultant deep unconsciousness) occurs with severe damage to the cerebrum, the largest part of the brain.

Deep Vein Thrombosis:

A blood clot in a deep vein.

Defibrillation:

The cessation of fibrillation of the cardiac muscle and restoration of a normal rhythm.

Delusional:

Having an irrational belief that cannot be changed by a rational argument, often found in schizophrenia and manic-depressive psychosis.

Diabetic Ketoacidosis:

Depletion of the body's alkali reserves due to diabetes, causing a major disruption in the body's acid-base balance. The breath smells fruity and the patient is usually comatose.

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Diagnosis:

Determining what's wrong with a patient by using the patient's symptoms, signs, test results, medical background, and other factors.

Dialysis:

The procedure to filter blood for patients with kidney failure, also used to remove absorbed toxins from overdosing and poisoning.

Diaphoresis:

Sweating.

Diastolic:

Pressure during the relaxing of the heart.

DIC:

Abbreviation for *Disseminated Intravascular Coagulation* (no blood clotting). (In many hospitals, ER personnel also interpret DIC to mean "death is coming" since disseminated intravascular coagulation usually means death is imminent)

Differential Diagnosis:

Diagnosis made by ruling out many disorders. The patient usually presents with symptoms that can be shared by many conditions. For example, chest pain can be caused by many diseases or conditions, and each one must be ruled out to arrive at the correct diagnosis.

Diplopia:

Double vision.

Disaster Protocol Color Coding:

The following color tags are used to immediately triage patients during a mass casualty event: Green is walking wounded; yellow is urgent; red is critical; black is DOA.

Distal Pulse:

The pulse farthest from the heart.

Diuresis:

The increased production of urine.

Diuretic:

Drug used to increased diuresis, i.e. Lasix.

Diverticulitis:

Inflammation of the colon.

DNR:

The abbreviation for *Do Not Resuscitate*, which is requested or ordered for terminally ill or injured patients.

DOA:

Abbreviation for *Dead On Arrival*.

DTP:

A diphtheria tetanus pertussis toxoid injection.

Dyspnea:

Shortness of breath.

Dystocia:

Difficult labor due to some fetal problem, such as dislocation of the shoulders.

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E

ECG:

Electrocardiogram. measures heart activity.

Eclampsia:

A serious condition affecting pregnant women in which the entire body is affected by convulsions and the patient eventually passes into a coma.

Ectopic pregnancy:

The development of the fetus in the fallopian tube instead of in the womb.

Edema:

Excessive accumulation of fluid.

EEG:

Electroencephalogram. measures brain activity.

EKG:

See ECG.

Electrolyte analysis:

Tests the basic chemicals in the body; sodium, potassium, chloride, and bicarbonate.

Embolectomy:

Surgical removal of an embolus.

Embolus:

A blood clot.

EMS:

Abbreviation for *Emergency Medical Service(s)*.

EMT:

Abbreviation for *Emergency Medical Technician*.

Endocarditis:

Inflammation of cardiac tissue, usually caused by bacterial infection.

Endoscope:

A long flexible tube with its own special lighting.

Endotracheal (ET) Tube:

A tube that serves as an artificial airway and is inserted through the patient's mouth or nose. It passes through the throat and into the air passages to help breathing. To do this it must also pass through the patient's vocal cords. The patient will be unable to speak as long as the endotracheal tube is in place. It is this tube that connects the respirator to the patient.

Epi:

Abbreviation for Epinephrine.

Epidermis:

The outer layer of the skin.

Epidural:

An epidural block; an injection through a catheter of a local anesthetic to relieve pain during labor, usually done at the lumbar level of the spine.

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Epiglottitis:

Inflammation of the epiglottis.

F

FACEP:

Abbreviation for *Fellow of the American College of Emergency Physicians*.

FACS:

Abbreviation for *Fellow of the American College of Surgeons*.

Fetal Distress:

A term used to describe a number of critical conditions threatening the live delivery of a fetus.

FHT:

Abbreviation for *Fetal Heart Tones*.

Fibrillation:

An uncoordinated, quivering of the heart muscle resulting in a completely irregular pulse.

First-degree burn:

A burn affecting only the epidermis. The color of the burn is red, capillary refill is present, the skin texture is normal, and the burn heals in five to ten days with no scarring.

Fluoroscope:

An X-ray machine.

Focused H and P:

A history and physical examination. H and P is the term used to describe an examination that results in a patient history and makes an assessment of his or her condition. The patient is physically examined and then talked to regarding his or her complaint and the doctor then makes a probable diagnosis. Focused means do not examine a patient's feet or do a rectal if they're complaining of a headache and double vision.

Foley (Catheter):

A thin, flexible, indwelling catheter, inserted through the urethra into the urinary bladder for drainage of urine. The urine drains through the tube and collects into an external plastic bag.

G

Gastric Lavage:

Irrigation of the stomach when poisoning or bleeding is suspected, or to remove ingested toxins before they enter the blood stream.

GCS:

See Glasgow coma scale.

GGF1:

[Slang] An abbreviation for *Grandpa's Got a Fever*, which is shorthand for a battery of tests performed when an elderly male presents with a fever of unknown origin. The tests included in a GGF1 are a CBC, Chem 7, chest film, U/A, and blood cultures times two.

GI cocktail:

A commonly used mixture of liquid donnatal (which stops gastrointestinal spasms), viscous Lidocaine and mylanta (which counteracts the stomach acid and soothes the stomach). This concoction is often given to patients presenting with severe heartburn, signs of an ulcer, or indications of an excess production of stomach acid.

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Giardiasis:

Intestinal infection with the *giardia* bacteria.

Glasgow coma scale:

This scale is used to quickly determine the status and degree of injury of a trauma victim to the head. For a more detailed description.

"Glove up and dig in":

Coarse slang phrase. See bowel disimpaction.

Golden hour:

[Slang] Also known as the golden window. When treating a patient who has had a myocardial infarction, emergency personnel must be extremely careful during the first hour. The ventricles are very sensitive during this period and life threatening arrhythmias can occur.

Gomer:

[Slang] ER term for "Get Out of My Emergency Room" and is a derogatory term for geriatric patients with multiple complicated medical problems.

Gorked:

[Slang] ER term for unconscious (as in "gorked patient"). Also used as a noun, as in "I've got a gork in 2".

Gram's stain:

A stain test that identifies various forms of bacterial microorganisms.

Granuloma:

A tumor.

GSW:

Abbreviation for *GunShot Wound*.

Guic:

A test of stool with a gloved finger inserted looking for blood.

H

H and P:

See also Focused H and P, history and physical: the initial evaluation and examination of a patient.

Heart/Lung Bypass:

Using a machine to breathe and circulate blood for a patient for any number of clinical or surgical reasons, like to also used to rewarm the blood of severely hypothermic patient.

Heimlich Maneuver:

A first-aid measure used to dislodge something caught in a person's throat that is obstructing breathing.

Hematochezia:

Maroon stools, usually from a lower GI bleed.

Hematocrit:

The proportion, by volume, of red blood cells in a CBC.

Hemiparesis:

Paralysis or weakness on one side of the body.

Hemorrhage:

The dramatic and sudden loss of blood.

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Hemoperfusion:

Dialysis of the blood to remove foreign substances such as poisons or drugs.

Hemopneumothorax:

Blood and air in the pleura. Also often referred to as a *Collapsed Lung*.

Hepatolenticular Degeneration:

Excessive accumulation of copper in the kidney, liver, and brain, which if untreated, is invariably fatal.

Holosystolic Murmur:

A heart murmur that begins with the heart sound S1 and occupying all of the systole, then reaching S2. S1 and S2 refer to heart sounds noted during palpation.

Horner's Syndrome:

The term used to describe the clinical profile of myosis, ptosis, and anhidrosis, which usually follows paralysis of the cervical sympathetic nerves on one side of the body.

Hyperaldosteronism:

Overproduction of the adrenal hormone aldosterone, causing abnormalities in the sodium, water, and potassium levels in the body.

Hypercalcemia:

An abnormally high concentration of calcium in the blood.

Hyperglycemia:

High values of glucose in the blood.

Hyperlipidemia:

Excessive fat in the blood.

Hyperthermia:

An abnormally high body temperature (fever).

Hypoglycemia:

Low values of glucose in the blood.

Hypohemia:

A lack of blood in the body.

Hypotension:

Abnormally low blood pressure.

Hypothermia:

When the body temperature reaches significantly below normal body temperatures (usually below 95 degrees).

Hypothyroidism:

Subnormal activity of the thyroid gland.

Hypovolemia:

A decrease in the volume of circulating blood; also referred to as being in shock.

Hypoxia:

A severe deficiency of oxygen in the blood and tissues.

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I

Ileectomy:

Surgical removal of the small intestine.

IM:

Abbreviation for *IntraMuscular* (pertaining to injections).

Infiltrate:

An abnormal substance (eg. a cancer cell) in a tissue or organ.

Intracerebral:

Inside the brain.

Intubation:

Insertion of an endotracheal tube to help an unconscious patient breathe.

IO:

Abbreviation for *IntraOsseous* (pertaining to injections).

Irritable Bowel Syndrome:

A chronic and unpleasant gastrointestinal condition marked by abdominal cramping, and diarrhea or constipation.

Ischemia:

When the heart is starving for oxygen.

IV:

Abbreviation for *IntraVenous*, meaning through the vein.

IV push, IVP:

Injecting medication rapidly into a vein to hit the blood system all at once.

J

JVD:

Jugular-Venous Distention.

K

K-Y:

K-Y jelly. A widely used water-soluble lubricant.

Kay ciel:

A potassium supplement.

KUB:

Shorthand for kidney, ureter, and bladder tests.

L

LAC:

Abbreviation for laceration (pronounced "lack").

Laparotomy:

Any surgery involving an incision in the abdominal wall.

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Laryngoscope:

An instrument for examining the larynx, also to properly visualize the vocal cords for endotracheal intubation.

Larynx:

The "voice box".

LFT:

Abbreviation for liver function test.

Lithotripsy:

Breaking up the renal calculi (kidney stones) with sound waves so they can be passed in the urine.

LOC:

Loss Of Consciousness.

LR:

Abbreviation for *Lactated Ringer's* solution.

Lumbar Puncture:

The withdrawal of cerebrospinal fluid through a hollow needle inserted into the lumbar region between the L4 and L5 vertebrae. Also referred to as a spinal tap.

'Lytes:

Abbreviation for an **Electrolyte Analysis** (pronounced "lights").

M

Macrosomic:

Fetal weight of more than 4,000 grams.

MCI:

Multiple Casualty Incident.

Meds:

Short for medications, or drugs.

Melena:

When a person is bleeding from an ulcer, consisting of black tarry stools indicative of upper GI bleeds.

Meningitis:

An inflammation of the meninges, the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord.

Metacarpal fracture:

A fracture of one of the five bones that form that part of the hand between the wrist and the fingers.

mg:

Abbreviation for milligrams.

MI:

Abbreviation for myocardial infarction.

MRI:

Abbreviation for magnetic resonance imaging. Imaging by computer using a strong magnetic field and radio frequencies.

MVA:

Abbreviation used in ERs for a motor vehicle accident.

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Myocardial infarction:

Condition caused by occlusion of one or more of the coronary arteries. A heart attack.

Myosis:

Excessive contraction of the pupil in the eye.

M&M:

Abbreviation for Morbidity/Mortality, is a conference held by many departments on cases that either ended in death (where there was an interesting diagnosis)--mortality, or someone with a good diagnosis - morbidity. More malignant programs use it to embarrass residents and their mistakes. If refreshments are served, often the nickname is death and donuts (D&D).

N

Nasogastric (NG) Tube:

A tube that passes through the patient's nose and throat and ends in the patient's stomach. This tube allows for direct "tube feeding" to maintain the nutritional status of the patient or removal of stomach acids.

Necrotic:

Dead, as in "necrotic tissue".

Needle cricothyroidotomy:

See cricothyroidotomy.

NICU:

Abbreviation for the *Neonatal Intensive Care Unit*.

Normal Sinus Rhythm:

A normal heart rate, which is between 60 and 80 beats per minute in an adult.

Nosocomial infections:

Opportunistic infections contracted while in the hospital, eg a urinary tract infection a patient develops from his foley catheter.

NPO:

Abbreviation for nothing by mouth (from the Latin *Nil Per Os*).

NS:

Abbreviation for *Normal Saline* solution.

NSAID:

Abbreviation for a *NonSteroid Anti-Inflammatory Drug* (e.g. Motrin, Advil, etc).

O

OD:

OverDose (drug).

O neg:

Type O, Rhesus negative blood; also called universal donor blood since any human can receive O negative blood without complication.

Orbital fracture:

A fracture of the bony socket that holds the eyeball.

Oriented X3:

See "*Awake, Alert and Oriented X3 Nonfocal*".

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Osteosarcoma:

Bone cancer.

Otitis media:

An infection of the middle ear.

P

Palpation:

This refers to blood pressure taken under emergency conditions when listening for the systolic and diastolic pressures with a stethoscope is impossible. Taken by feeling (palpation) the pulse.

Pancreatitis:

Chronic or acute inflammation of the pancreas.

Pancreatotomy:

Surgical removal of the pancreas.

Papilledema:

Edema of the optic disk, often indicative of increased intracranial pressure.

Paresis:

Partial or slight paralysis.

Path Urine:

Urinalysis.

Pedal:

Related to the foot.

Perfed Appy:

When an infected appendix bursts opens and spills into the gut.

Pericardial Centesis:

The draining of fluid from the pericardium.

Pericardial Effusion:

Blood or fluid leaking into the **pericardium**.

Pericardium:

The sac that envelops the heart.

Peritoneal Lavage:

Irrigation of the peritoneum.

Peritoneum:

A transparent membrane enclosing the abdominal cavity.

PID:

Abbreviation for *Pelvic Inflammatory Disease*.

Placental Abruptio:

The placenta separates from the lining of the womb too early, resulting in pain and bleeding.

Platelets:

Components of blood designed to form clots and plug leaks from bleeding arteries and veins.

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Pleura:

The lining around the lung.

PO:

"By Mouth" (from the Latin *Per Os*). To administer orally.

PO₂:

The oxygen tension in arterial blood.

PQRST:

A mnemonic device used to quickly evaluate chest pain.

- P stands for "palliative and provoking": Does anything make the pain better or worse?
- Q stands for "quality"; What, precisely does the pain feel like? Is it stabbing and knife-like or dull and throbbing?
- R stands for "radiation": Does the pain radiate anywhere beyond the chest, such as into the arm or jaw?
- S stands for "severity": On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being almost no pain at all and 10 being the worst pain imaginable, what number does the pain rank?
- T stands for "timing": What specifically, were you doing when the pain began and how long have you had it?.

Preeclampsia:

The physical condition of pregnant woman prior to eclampsia. Symptoms include blood pressure greater than 140/90; persistent proteinuria (protein in the urine); and edema.

Preemie:

[Slang] Expression for a baby born before full term, usually defined as a child born weighing less than five and a half pounds.

PT:

Prothrombine time, a clotting factor test for blood.

PSVT:

Paroxysmal SupraVentricular Tachycardia. This heart condition usually affects young adults and is characterized by a heartbeat that becomes very rapid and then returns to normal after a few seconds or minutes.

PTT:

Partial prothrombine time, see **PT**.

Ptosis:

Drooping of the eyelid.

Pulmonary Edema:

Fluid in the lungs.

Pulmonary Embolism:

A blood clot in the lungs.

Pulsatile:

Beating, as in a pulsatile mass.

Pulse:

A pulsating artery that gives evidence that the heart is beating, usually about 70 times per minute.

Puls/Ox:

Pulse oximetry, a measure of the saturation of hemoglobin by oxygen, or how well the person is breathing.

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Pulsus Paradoxus:

A condition in which the pulse pressure declines during respiratory inspiration.

PVCs:

Premature cardiac ventricular contractions.

Pyelogram:

An x-ray of the kidneys using an intravenously inserted dye.

Q

q:

Every iteration, i.e. a med of q5min would be every five minutes, or q6h is every 6 hours.

R

Rape Kit:

A package containing envelopes for the collection of hair, sperm, and blood samples of a rape victims, as well as the official reporting forms.

Reflux:

Moving backward in the esophagus

Renogram:

An x-ray of the kidneys.

Respirations:

Breaths; the act of inhaling and exhaling.

Retrocecal:

Behind the cecum.

S

Saline Solution:

A blood volume substitute made of salt and water, a temporary substitute for lost blood.

Schizophrenia:

A mental disorder marked by hallucinations, delusions, and disintegration of the thought processes.

Scoop and Run:

[Slang] A phrase used by EMTs and ER personnel for a situation where no treatment is possible at an accident scene and all they can do it "scoop" up the victims and "run" with them to the ER.

Second-Degree Burn:

There are two levels of second-degree burn: The first level is a burn in which both the epidermis and the underlying dermis are damaged. The color of the burn is red (and there may be blistering); capillary refill is present; the skin texture is edematous (filled with fluid), and the burn heals in 10 to 21 days with no or minimal scarring. The second level is a damaging, deep partial-thickness burn that is pink or white in color; capillary refill might or might not be present; the skin texture is thick; and the burn heals in 25-60 days with a dense scar.

Sed Rate:

Erythrocyte sedimentation rate, a red blood count used to determine inflammation and tissue destruction.

Sepsis:

A very severe infection.

TERMS & ABBREVIATIONS

Serum Amylase Enzyme Test:

A test for pancreatitis.

Shock:

A circulatory disturbance marked by a severe drop in blood pressure, rapid pulse, clammy skin, pallor, and a rapid heart rate.

Spinal Tap:

See lumbar puncture.

Spleen:

A part of lymphatic system, helps filter blood of bacteria and impurities.

Splenectomy:

Surgical removal of the spleen.

Stasis:

A slowing or stopping of blood flow.

Stat:

From the Latin *statim*, meaning immediately.

STD:

Abbreviation for *Sexually Transmitted Disease*.

Sternotomy:

Surgical opening of the breast bone.

Stomach Pumping:

A large tube called an Ewald is inserted into the stomach, sucks out the contents, then the stomach is flushed out with clear water then charcoal and a cathartic (a fluid that passes through the bowel quickly).

Streptokinase:

An enzyme that can break up and liquefy blood clots.

Stridor:

What breathing sounds like when the larynx or trachea is obstructed.

Subdural:

Outside the brain.

Sublingual:

A medication that is taken by dissolving under the tongue.

Systolic:

Pressure during the contraction of the heart.

Systolic murmur:

A cardiac murmur that occurs between the first and second heart sounds.

T

T3, T4, etc:

Third thoracic vertebrae; fourth thoracic vertebrae, etc.

Tachycardia:

An extremely rapid heart rate, usually signified by a pulse over 100 beats per minute.

TERMS & ABBREVIATIONS

Tension Pneumothorax:

A collapsed lung.

Tetralogy of Fallot:

A surgically correctable congenital heart defect that consists of pulmonary stenosis, hypertrophy (enlargement), of the right ventricle, a ventricular septal defect, and a shift of the aorta to the right.

Third-Degree Burn:

A burn that damages (or destroys) the full thickness of the skin and the tissues underneath. The color of the burn is white, black, or brown; capillary refill is absent; the skin texture is leathery; and there is no spontaneous healing.

Thoracotomy:

Surgery on the thoracic (chest cavity).

Thrill:

A vibration that a doctor or nurse can feel by touch, often used to describe cardiac murmurs that can be felt through the chest wall.

Thrombosis:

A blood clot.

Torsades de Pointes:

A type of polymorphic ventricular tachycardia in which the heart races at extremely high rates in an arrhythmia.

Tox Screen:

Toxicological analysis of the blood, ordered when a drug overdose is suspected and the drugs need to be identified.

Tracheal Shift:

A physical shift of the windpipe due to trauma.

Tracheostomy:

A temporary surgical opening at the front of the throat providing access to the trachea or windpipe to assist in breathing.

Trauma Center:

An emergency room with a trauma surgeon on duty.

Triage:

The system of prioritizing patients in an emergency situation in which there are a great number of injured or ill.

Type and Crossmatch:

Blood typing to identify patient's blood type.

U

U/A:

Urinalysis, used to test for kidney failure, dehydration, diabetes, undernourishment, or bladder or kidney infection.

Ulcerative Colitis:

An inflammatory and ulcerative condition of the colon.

TERMS & ABBREVIATIONS

Ultrasound:

A test similar to an x-ray, but which uses sound waves.

Unstable Angina:

angina pectoris in which the cardiac pain has changed in pattern.

Uric Acid:

An acid formed in the breakdown of nucleoproteins in tissues; often tested when gout is suspected since a high uric acid content in the blood often causes gout symptoms and the formation of stones.

UTI:

Abbreviation for urinary tract infection.

V

V/Q scan:

A ventilation-perfusion scan, used to confirm a diagnosis of pulmonary embolism.

Valsalva Maneuver:

When a patient is instructed to blow on his or her thumb to maximize intrathoracic pressure. It is used when cardiac trouble is suspected.

Venipuncture:

The drawing of blood from a vein.

Ventricular Septal Rupture:

Rupture of the ventricular septum caused by mechanical failure of infarcted cardiac tissue.

Vitamin H:

ER shorthand for haldol.

V-fib:

Ventricular **fibrillation**.

V-tach:

Ventricular tachycardia.

W

WBC:

Abbreviation for *White Blood Cell* count, used to determine how many white blood cells there are in the body to defend against bacteria.

Wheezer:

[Slang] An asthmatic patient, or any patient having difficulty breathing.

Whipple Procedure:

A pancreatectomy, where the distal stomach, gallbladder, and duodenum are usually also taken out during the surgery, and they usually leave a little of the distal pancreas behind.